

An Introduction to the National Wetland Conservation Fund

What is the National Wetland Conservation Fund?

- Funding program for wetland restoration and enhancement
- New program – announced in early 2014
- Part of the 5-year National Conservation Plan
- Administered by Environment Canada
- Application-based
- \$50 million Canada-wide, over the 5 years of the program – works out to approximately \$2 million per year per region. Our local region includes British Columbia and the Yukon.

What are the objectives of the program?

1. **Restore** drained or lost wetlands on working and settled landscapes
2. **Enhance** the infrastructure and/or functionality of degraded wetlands
3. **Scientifically** assess and monitor the health and functionality of wetlands and the species that use them

- Note that about 95% of the National Wetland Conservation Fund will be allocated to objectives 1 & 2

What kinds of activities are eligible for support under the program?

- Restoring hydrology: excavation of wetland basins; removal of drainage infrastructure; construction or upgrades to dykes, culverts, water level controls; etc.
- Invasive species removal
- Planting and management of native vegetation
- Livestock exclusion fencing
- Assessment of existing restoration/enhancement efforts
- Wetland inventory and prioritization
- Project administration, planning, communication
- Limited habitat securement: securement must support and enable wetland restoration and enhancement activities on the secured land.

What types of projects is the program aimed at?

- The National Wetland Conservation Fund is aimed at larger-scale projects:
 - Projects range from \$20,000 to a few hundred thousand dollars in size
 - Focus is on projects in the \$50,000 - \$250,000/year range
 - Maximum size: \$500,000/year
- Multi-year projects are permitted - up to a maximum of three years
- Priorities:
 - Regions where wetland loss/degradation has been high, is ongoing, or there is high risk of future loss
 - Projects supporting existing habitat-based planning processes
 - Projects providing more diverse and longer-term ecological benefits

What kinds of projects have been supported so far?

- Projects funded to date include:
 - Dyke breach to restore hydrology in an estuary
 - Removal of infill and restoration to saltmarsh at an old industrial site

- Wetland creation – excavation of small wetland basins
- Upgrades to water control infrastructure (water level controls, culverts, etc.)
- Riparian fencing – small and large-scale
- Invasive plant removal, native species planting, bird/bat boxes, basking logs, woody debris installation, etc.
- Wetland prioritization and detailed restoration planning

What are the National Wetland Conservation Fund program requirements?

- **1:1 matching funds required:** Maximum 50% of the total project cost from NWCF; \$1 from NWCF requires ≥\$1 from other sources
 - Other federal funds are not eligible as match (e.g. grants from DFO)
- Match may be cash or in-kind
 - Potential sources of match include: Provincial or municipal government, NGOs, private landowners or individuals, the private sector, the recipient, or other non-federal grants
 - Eligible in-kind support includes: equipment loans, donations of land, building materials, or supplies, volunteer labour, donated staff time (e.g. from partner organizations)

Who is eligible to apply for National Wetland Conservation Fund support?

- Non-government organizations
- Aboriginal organizations and communities
- Individuals
- Universities
- Private corporations
- Provincial, territorial, and municipal governments

Where can National Wetland Conservation Fund projects take place?

- Projects can take place on private land, provincial crown land, municipal land, or aboriginal land

A few items are ineligible for the National Wetland Conservation Fund:

- Projects on federal land (national parks, National Wildlife Areas, or other federal department land such as Transport Canada or the Department of National Defense) are *not* eligible for National Wetland Conservation Fund support
- Wetland projects that are required by law, regulation or policy (e.g. mitigation requirements for a development) are *not* eligible for National Wetland Conservation Fund support

How to Apply

Funding Program page:

www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/Default.asp?lang=En&n=3A49CF19-1

Application Guide (2015/2016):

http://www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/923047A0-C8C8-477E-A65E-232C233C04E3/2594_NCP_NWCF_Application_Guidelines2015_16_v01.pdf

Application Form (2015/2016):

http://www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/923047A0-C8C8-477E-A65E-232C233C04E3/2594_NCP_NWCF_Application_Form_2015_16_v03.pdf

Applications for fiscal year 2015/2016 (April 2015 to March 2016) have recently closed. The next application period will be in fall 2015, probably September or October, and will be for projects taking place from April 2016 to March 2017 (and beyond for multi-year projects). Updated application guides and application forms will be available at that time. In the meantime, the 2015/2016 documents provide guidance on what is required to apply.

If you have questions about the program or want to discuss a potential project (e.g. eligibility, how to apply, etc.) please contact:

Ivy Whitehorne

National Wetland Conservation Fund Coordinator, Pacific and Yukon Region

Environment Canada

Ivy.Whitehorne@ec.gc.ca

604-350-1939